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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BISHKEK 000952

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/26/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [KG](#)
SUBJECT: KYRGYZ FOREIGN MINISTER AGREES TO OCT 5-6
CONSULTATIONS AND REQUESTS MEETINGS FOR PM WITH PRESIDENT
OBAMA AT UNGA

REF: BISHKEK 927

Classified By: Ambassador Tatiana C. Gfoeller, for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Ambassador met with Foreign Minister Sarbayev August 26 to provide him with the invitation to the Annual Bilateral Consultations (ABC) and the National Day message from President Obama. Sarbayev agreed to hold the ABC on October 5-6 and was visibly happy to have the National Day message from the President. Sarbayev said that he looked forward to the consultations in Washington and requested brief meetings with Secretary Clinton and Under Secretary Burns. Sarbayev told the Ambassador that President Bakiyev planned to visit the Transit Center in early September and outlined the President's interest in seeing actual daily activities, meeting Kyrgyz and American employees at the Center and seeing Kyrgyz companies operating there. Sarbayev detailed Prime Minister Chudinov's planned trip to New York for the United Nations General Assembly and Washington, DC. Sarbayev requested brief meetings on the margins of UNGA between PM Chudinov and President Obama and Secretary Clinton. END SUMMARY.

FM AGREES TO OCTOBER 5-6 VISIT TO DC

12. (C) Ambassador Gfoeller met with Foreign Minister Kadyrbek Sarbayev August 26 to give him personally his invitation from Assistant Secretary Blake for the upcoming Annual Bilateral Consultations (ABC) in Washington. Sarbayev agreed to holding the consultations on Monday October 5 and Tuesday October 6. He said that he would inform President Bakiyev that he would be in Washington for the consultations in October and subsequently respond formally to A/S Blake's invitation. Sarbayev again reiterated that he would raise the visit of President Bakiyev to the U.S. during his time in Washington (REFTEL). He said that Kyrgyzstan would like to sign an unspecified "bilateral framework agreement" with the U.S., covering the overall relationship, noting that Kyrgyzstan only has security-related agreements with the U.S. so far.

13. (C) In addition to the discussions with Assistant Secretary Blake during the ABC, Sarbayev said that, if possible, he would like short meetings with Secretary Clinton and Under Secretary Burns. Sarbayev also requested a meeting with officials from the Office of the Secretary of Defense on October 7 to review the activities of the Transit Center and USAID to review assistance priorities. Sarbayev said that he would like to meet with Special Representative for

Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke to discuss Kyrgyzstan's support of peace in Afghanistan. He also plans to have a lunch meeting with Washington "think tanks," including CSIS, Carnegie Endowment and Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy.

14. (C) The Ambassador also gave Sarbayev the National Day message from President Obama to President Bakiyev. Sarbayev was visibly happy to receive it. He did not raise with the Ambassador, as other GOKG officials have, that the U.S. did not send a congratulatory note to President Bakiyev for the elections.

PRESIDENT BAKIYEV'S VISIT TO TRANSIT CENTER

15. (C) Foreign Minister Sarbayev told the Ambassador that President Bakiyev wanted to visit the Transit Center in early September, and offered September 11 as a possible date. He said that he, the Ministers of Defense, and Transportation would accompany the President, in addition to officials from the President's Administration, the Governor of the Chuisky Oblast, and the president of the Manas International Airport. Sarbayev said that there would be press during the visit to the Transit Center and that it needed to receive "good PR." At the Ambassador's suggestion, Sarbayev agreed to lead a small delegation of Ministers to the Transit Center on September 4 to review informally the facilities in preparation of the President's visit.

16. (C) Sarbayev provided the Ambassador with the President's

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ideas for the visit to the Transit Center. He explained that the President wanted to tour the facilities, visit the location of the ramp construction project, see and visit with Kyrgyz and American employees at the Transit Center, and view the Center's daily activities. He said that the most important point of the visit should be to show the world (through the accompanying media) that the Base had indeed closed and the Transit Center was a wholly different, mainly non-military organization. In that context, he asked that number of U.S. soldiers with weapons should be kept to a minimum during the visit. Sarbayev said the President wanted to see the Kyrgyz companies operating at the Transit Center, visit the medical unit, and that he wanted to highlight the positive activities of the Center in the local community. Sarbayev confirmed that once the President visited the Transit Center, then a group of Parliamentarians would be visiting and touring the Center.

17. (C) Somewhat surprisingly, Sarbayev then asked the Ambassador if the U.S. would mind if Kyrgyzstan were to negotiate Transit Center agreements with other countries that had previously had Base agreements, such as the French. The Ambassador said that the U.S. would certainly have no objections to this, citing the international nature of the Coalition fighting in Afghanistan. Seemingly emphasizing the "special relations" Kyrgyzstan had with the U.S., Sarbayev then handed the Ambassador a copy of a draft Transit Center agreement the French had sent over to him as a basis for negotiations. It looked similar to the one we have signed with the Kyrgyz. Having made his show of candor, Sarbayev then pocketed the agreement back.

PM VISIT TO UNGA AND WASHINGTON

18. (C) Sarbayev reiterated to the Ambassador that Prime Minister Chudinov wanted to meet with senior USG officials on the margins of UNGA, including President Obama and Secretary Clinton. Chudinov will be in New York on September 22 and September 25. On September 23 and 24 he planned to travel to Washington and, according to Sarbayev, wanted to meet with Vice President Biden and senior State Department officials,

depending upon the availability of President Obama and Secretary Clinton. Sarbayev said that Chudinov would also meet in Washington with the U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund among other meetings. Sarbayev concluded that Chudinov's schedule is still tentative, however, and he could rearrange his New York and Washington dates if that would help him obtain the high-level meetings he was requesting.

CARGO PAD PROJECT

19. (C) The Ambassador informed Sarbayev that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has decided to re-bid the USD 8 million hot cargo pad portion of the Transit Center ramp construction project, citing its cost. The Ambassador said that Kyrgyz companies would be able to compete for the project, noting that the timing of the request for proposal may come after the planned October "vendors conference" in Bishkek. Sarbayev was pleased to get this news, noting that this information, along with the National Day message, was another "plus" for today's meeting and the positively evolving overall bilateral relationship. The Ambassador highlighted that the cargo pad bidding process will be open and transparent and that Kyrgyz companies will need to be competitive in order to win it.

NDN

10. (C) The Ambassador told the Foreign Minister that the first test cargo for the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) was currently transiting Kyrgyzstan and today will arrive at Tash-Kumir. The Minister was happy to hear the news. The Ambassador raised minor tax and customs complications with the cargo and the need to develop a systematic approach by the Government of Kyrgyzstan to provide the necessary information to the variety of government agencies, including Kyrgyz customs and tax authorities, regarding the status of goods and services that fall under the Transit Center

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agreement. The Minister agreed and said that he would review the previously negotiated framework agreement regarding the government's obligations.

NEW GOVERNMENT

11. (C) The Ambassador asked when the President would announce the formation of the new government expected after the July re-election of President Bakiyev. Sarbayev said that the government was set in its current form and would not change dramatically. Specifically, he said that he would remain as Foreign Minister for the foreseeable future and Chudinov would remain as Prime Minister, "for at least a year." He added that the President planned to make some structural changes to the government in October, streamlining it and hoping to improve its overall functioning and coordination.

COMMENT

12. (C) The Kyrgyz are interested in quickly solidifying the U.S.-Kyrgyzstan relationship following the new agreement on the Transit Center and the successful visits of Under Secretary Burns, Assistant Secretary Blake, and CENTCOM General Petraeus. The President's visit to the Transit Center in early September and the decision to send the Prime Minister to NY for UNGA all point to a new interest in engaging the U.S. and, possibly, repairing any damage done by threatening to close Manas. (It is notable that last year, a lower level official not known for his intelligence or access represented the Kyrgyz Republic at the UNGA.) President Bakiyev last visited the former Manas Air Base in 2006.

Problems in the U.S.-Kyrgyzstan relationship remain, principally the flawed Presidential elections and decline in freedoms, but we believe that constructive engagement with the GOKG will enable the U.S. to have a long-term presence in Kyrgyzstan, a key transit location for operations in Afghanistan.

GFOELLER